

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE
A NEUTRAL FORUM FOR
FAIR AND INDEPENDENT
RESOLUTION OF MATTERS IN
A PROFESSIONAL, EFFICIENT
AND INNOVATIVE WAY,
ENSURING DUE PROCESS
AND RESPECTING THE
DIGNITY OF ALL

Advances made by the Office of
Administrative Hearings in the
areas of technology, organization,
and timeliness of service
have resulted in it becoming
a model for other entities,
including central panels in
other states and countries.
For more information, visit the
Office of Administrative Hearing's
website at www.oah.dgs.ca.gov.



The Office of Administrative Hearings has six regional locations with hearing rooms. Hearings, mediations, and other proceedings may also be heard at other venues.

Administrative Division

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Special Education Division

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2349 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 200
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(916) 274-6035

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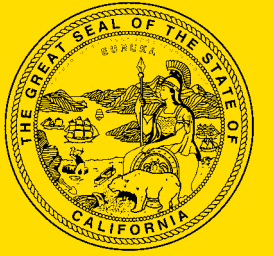
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OAH

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS



WHERE DO INDIVIDUALS
AND GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES GO TO RESOLVE
DISPUTES IN CALIFORNIA?



AN INDEPENDENT STATE ENTITY THAT CONDUCTS ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND PROVIDES ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES

The Office of Administrative Hearings is a central panel of experienced, highly qualified administrative law judges who preside as neutral judicial officers at hearings and settlement conferences. They also serve as impartial mediators at mediations held to resolve disputes between parties.

The Office of Administrative Hearings consists of two divisions located in six regional offices at major population centers throughout the State. The General Jurisdiction Division conducts hearings, mediations, and settlement conferences for

more than 1,000 state, local, and county agencies. The Special Education Division conducts special education due process hearings and mediations for school districts and parents of children with special education needs throughout the State.

Fair and Independent Resolution

The Office of Administrative Hearings is an independent State entity that conducts administrative hearings and provides alternate dispute resolution services for a wide variety of State and local entities. It employs administrative law judges, who are

separate and independent from the agencies and other parties that appear before them.

The goal of the Office of Administrative Hearings is to provide a neutral forum for fair and independent resolution of administrative matters, ensuring due process and respecting the dignity of all.

Professional and Occupational Licensing Disputes

One key role of the Office of Administrative Hearings is to ensure due process of law in hearings involving professional or occupational licensing issues. These are serious matters, which weigh the need for public safety and protection against the ability of someone to practice a profession or occupation.

Due to the wide range of professions and occupations involved in the hearings—from doctors to real estate agents to contractors—administrative law judges are familiar with a broad range of issues. They assure that all parties receive a neutral and fair “day in court.”

Government Agency/ School District Disputes

Increasingly, State and local agencies and school districts turn to the Office of Administrative Hearings to provide unbiased and professional administrative law judges and mediators, who preside over a wide variety of disputes and claims including those involving services for persons with developmental disabilities, teacher disciplinary matters, teacher reduction in force hearings, retirement disputes, and local ordinance violations.

Special Education Issues

Few issues are as emotionally charged as those involving the well being of a child. A major focus of the Office of Administrative Hearings is providing independent legal oversight in special education disputes between school districts and families with children who have disabilities.

As a neutral third party in these matters, an administrative law judge works first as

a mediator to help resolve a dispute to everyone's satisfaction. In the rare case where a resolution before hearing is not achieved, a full hearing is held and another administrative law judge determines the outcome.

There are many issues surrounding the field of special education. The administrative law judges who handle these cases have the education and experience needed to fully understand and resolve these matters.

Handling a Statewide Demand for Hearings

The Office of Administrative Hearings has successfully responded to the growing demand for its services, while hearing or resolving matters within a reasonable time frame. Each year, between 10,000 and 14,000 cases are filed with the Office of Administrative Hearings. This is equivalent to the number of cases heard by some of the largest and most prominent courts in the country.

The Office of Administrative Hearings is using new technologies, such as a comprehensive centralized calendaring system, video conferencing, and webcasts, in order to deliver its services in a more efficient and effective manner. As a result of these efforts, the average time from filing of a case to resolution has been significantly reduced from one year to six months, and a substantial backlog of cases has been eliminated.

To make these services available, there are six regional offices where hearings are held located in major population centers. In addition, administrative law judges regularly travel to hearings at other locations around the State making the process more accessible to the parties.

The Office of Administrative Hearings is a self-supporting entity relying on the fees charged for the services it provides, which are generally paid by the agency seeking its services at rates that are significantly less than the same services provided by private organizations.

WHAT IS AN ALJ?

Administrative law judges are highly trained legal professionals with experience in deciding cases involving complex issues. They preside as neutral judicial officers at hearings and settlement conferences and as impartial mediators at mediations.



NEUTRAL PARTY.

As a neutral third party, an administrative law judge works as a mediator to help resolve the dispute to everyone's satisfaction. In the rare case where a resolution is not achieved, a full hearing is set and an outcome is determined.



GROWING DEMAND.

The Office of Administrative Hearings handles between 10,000 and 14,000 cases each year, which is equivalent to the number of cases heard by some of the largest and most prominent courts in the country.

